



Naval Medical Research and Development

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News Releases

Navy Lab Opens a State of the Art Insectary in the Amazon Region of Peru

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Capt. Adam Armstrong, Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 6, and the Honorable Brian Nichols, U.S. Ambassador to Peru, celebrated the opening of a new insectary with a ribbon cutting ceremony

LIMA, Peru – The U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 6 (NAMRU-6) celebrated the opening of a new insectary, December 9, 2016. The event started with a ribbon cutting ceremony. The Honorable Brian Nichols, U.S. Ambassador to Peru, and the Commanding Officer of the Naval Medical Research Center, Capt. Jacqueline Rychnovsky, attended the event along with other invited guests. The new insectary will be an important asset to continue the fight against vector borne diseases like malaria and dengue fever.

“The work that will take place in the new building is critical to the understanding and mitigation of infectious diseases in the country, and exemplifies the collaboration between the Peruvian Navy and U.S. Navy, as well as with the Ministry of Health, local and international universities, and research institutions,” said Capt. Adam Armstrong, commanding officer, NAMRU-6.

“An ‘insectary’ is a term entomologists use to describe a building where insects are reared. Usually an insectary houses self-sustaining colonies in the lab and are an important resource for the study of basic biology, as well as for applied studies such as novel control measures,” said Dr. Gisella Vasquez, Deputy Department Head of Entomology, NAMRU-6.

The modern 2,500 sq. foot, two story building in the Amazon Region of Peru is the culmination of years of research. For example, in 2014, the NAMRU-6 *Anopheles darlingi* colonization team received the Delores M. Etter Top Scientists and Engineers group award. The new insectary will continue to enhance the efforts of this award-winning work.

“The new insectary brings a state of the art laboratory for rearing the mosquito, *An. darlingi*, the most important malaria vector in the region,” said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Craig Stoops, Department

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Head of Entomology, NAMRU-6.

In addition to rearing *An. darling*, the insectary supports the study of other important mosquito vectors such as *Aedes aegypti*, the vector for yellow fever, dengue and zika.

“Right now we have self-sustaining colonies of *An. darlingi* and *Ae. aegypti*. These mosquitos complete their entire life cycle in the lab, from egg, to larva, to pupa, and finally to adult,” said Stoops.

The insectary allows for exciting advances in vaccine development against malaria. “The new insectary will facilitate the production of the malaria parasite, which is critical to the efforts to develop a vaccine for the prevention of malaria in deployed troops,” Stoops continued.

The insectary will serve as a regional resource to assist in improving the ability of regional governments to control malaria in local populations.

The opening of the insectary exemplifies the importance of Navy Medicine’s overseas labs to continue forward force health protection research and Navy Medicine’s commitment to innovative and collaborative projects.

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